

Introduction

In July of 2002, at the request of community representatives, City of San Diego Planning Department staff began research into the history of the Islenair subdivision, located in the San Diego community of City Heights. Following preliminary research, staff conducted an intensive architectural survey of Islenair with the purpose of completing individual California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record Forms (DPR-523) for each property and assessing the integrity of the district.

Research revealed that Islenair is a modest middle class subdivision designed in keeping with the suburban design philosophies of small, moderately priced homes along curving tree-lined streets which had begun with the City Beautiful movement in the 1890's. It borrowed design influences of other San Diego subdivisions in development at that time, such as Kensington, with its canyon orientation, curved streets, and palm tree-lined parkways; while at the same time maintaining the pattern of small-scale development, both in terms of the house size and the size of the neighborhood, that was typical of subdivisions in the City Heights area.

However, efforts to establish the district stalled shortly thereafter due to a lack of adequate staffing. Work on the district resumed in January of 2007, with an updated survey and a revised context statement, statement of significance, and period of significance. The updated survey revealed that of the 114 properties within Islenair, 83 properties contribute to the significance of Islenair, while 31 do not contribute due either to modifications or to a construction date outside the period of significance. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of the resources in Islenair have been identified as contributing to the significance of the district.

The report that follows includes:

- ◆ a description of the survey area and district boundary;
- ◆ a historical context for the development of Islenair;
- ◆ a statement of significance and period of significance
- ◆ a detailed description of the survey methodology, including how historical integrity was assessed, the classification of contributing and non-contributing resources, and the use of California Historical Resource Status Codes;
- ◆ State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record Forms (DPR-523A and 523-B) for each resource within the district boundary; and
- ◆ Development and Design Guidelines as well as the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards to assist in review of development within the District.

Historic designation has many incentives that can benefit the owners of historic property. Among the many benefits for property owners is the Mills Act, which allows for a reduction in property taxes; and the use of the State Historic Building Code, which allows for greater leniency in the rehabilitation of historically designated homes. In return the property owner has the responsibility to be sensitive to the historic character of their home and district when proposing development or rehabilitation to their structure. If a property owner is interested in making changes to the exterior of their home, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards will be consulted. Historically designated properties generally lend themselves to the improvement of the surrounding community. Pride in homeownership also promotes revitalization in the neighborhood, and overall property value increases.

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